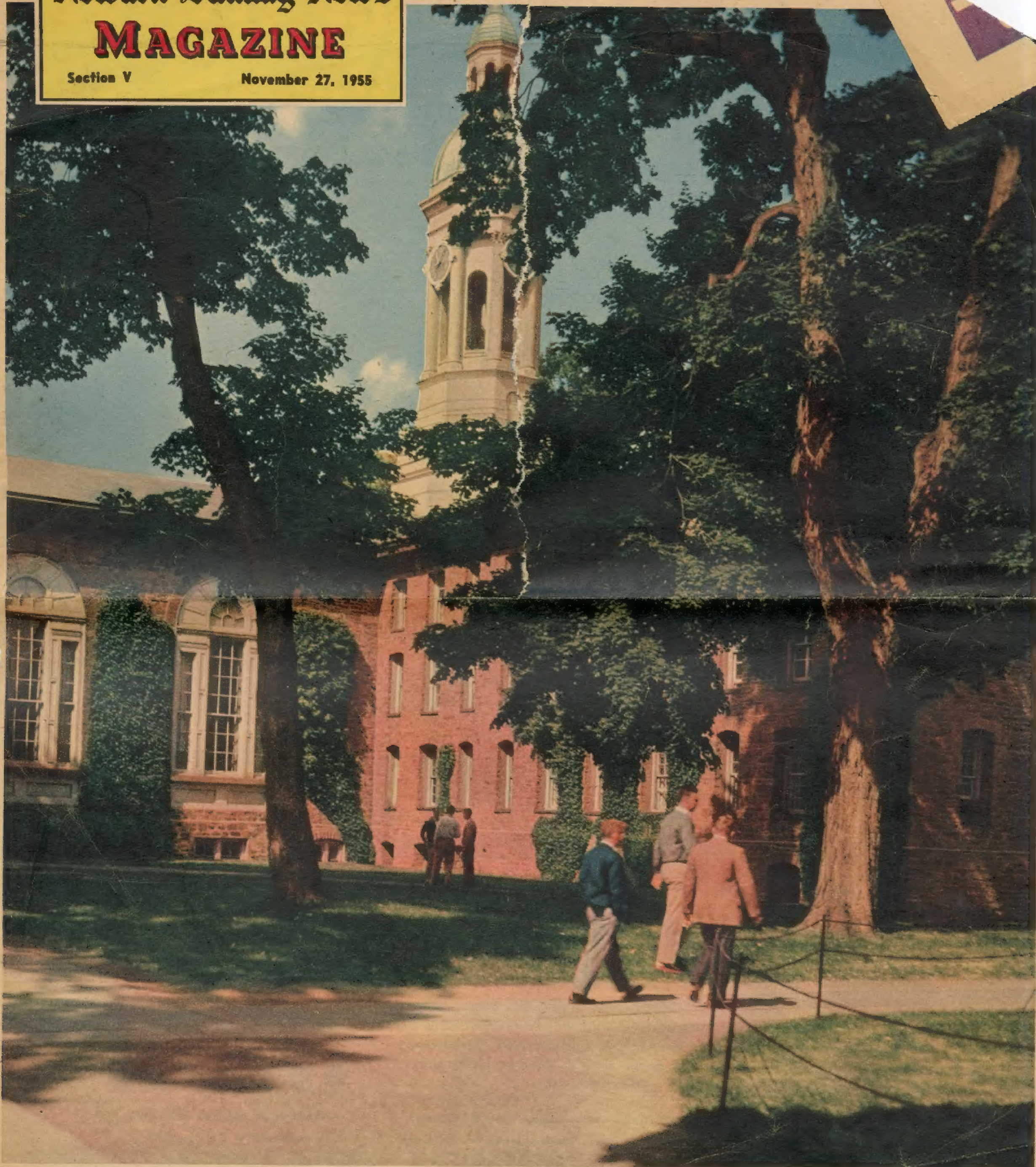


Newark Sunday News

MAGAZINE

Section V

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PRINCETON'S PART IN THE JERSEY COLLEGE STORY . . . STARTS ON PAGE 4

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NEW JERSEY COLLEGES:

PRINCETON'S FIRST 150 YEARS

Chartered Originally as
College of New Jersey,
the University Adopted
Present Identity at the
1896 Sesqui-Centennial

By JOHN T. CUNNINGHAM

PRINCETON is a university and Princeton is a town, yet so subtly has each shaped the destiny of the other that now it is difficult to think of one without the other.

Two centuries ago Princeton town welcomed a tiny college struggling to

This is the second of a series of articles which not only describe New Jersey's colleges and universities, but tell the story of the growth and traditions of individual colleges within the state, picture their roles in modern education and explain how they plan to meet what has been called "an impending tide of students."

"The Princeton Story," presented in two parts, will be concluded next Sunday.

stay alive in Newark, gave it a home in quiet rural surroundings. The years have richly rewarded the good samaritan. Grown into a great uni-

COLOR PHOTOS BY TUTTLE



Tree-lined McCosh Walk honors the second of Princeton's notable Scotsmen, Rev. James McCosh,

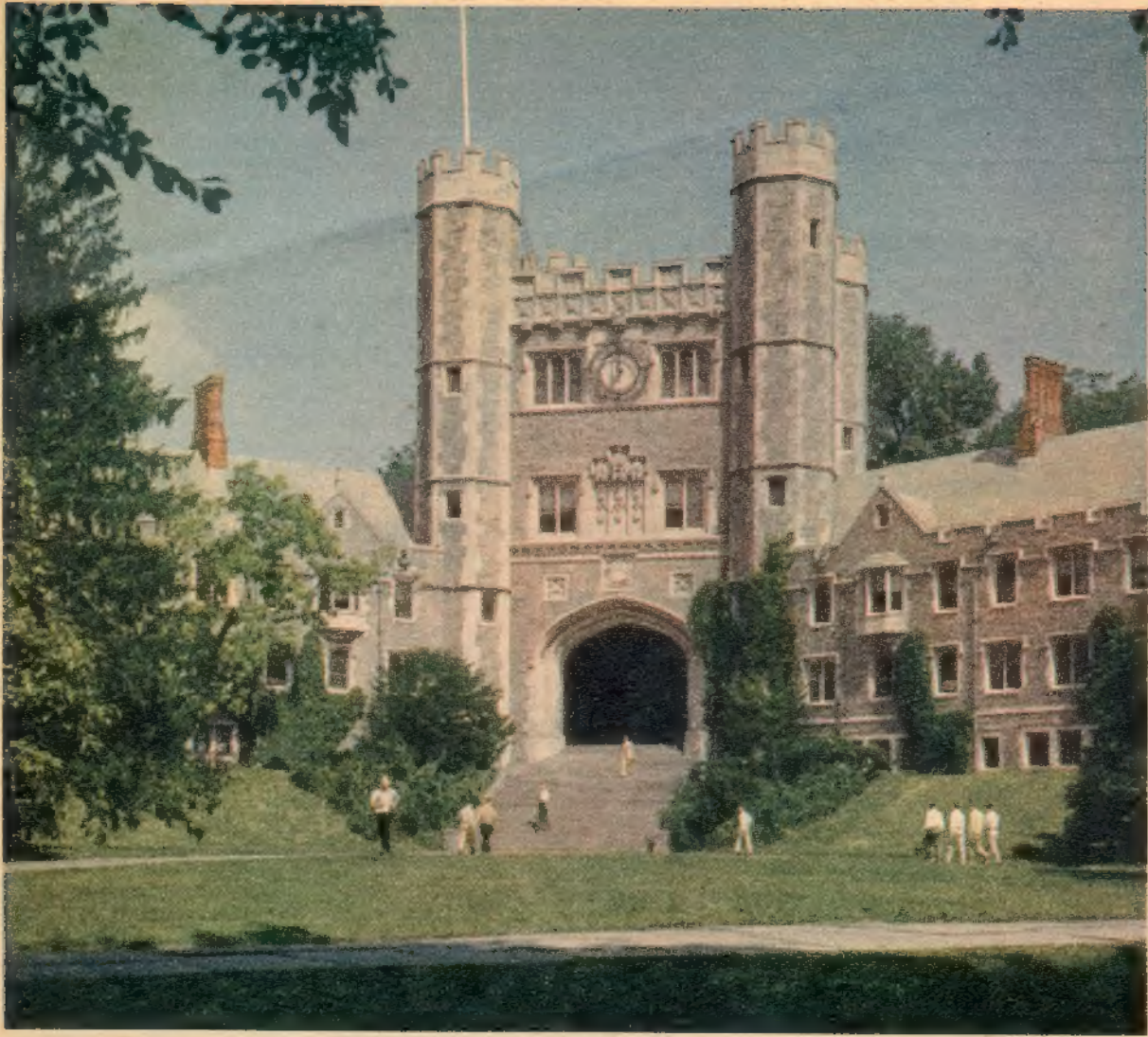
who was responsible for the physical growth of the campus and the diversity of its students.



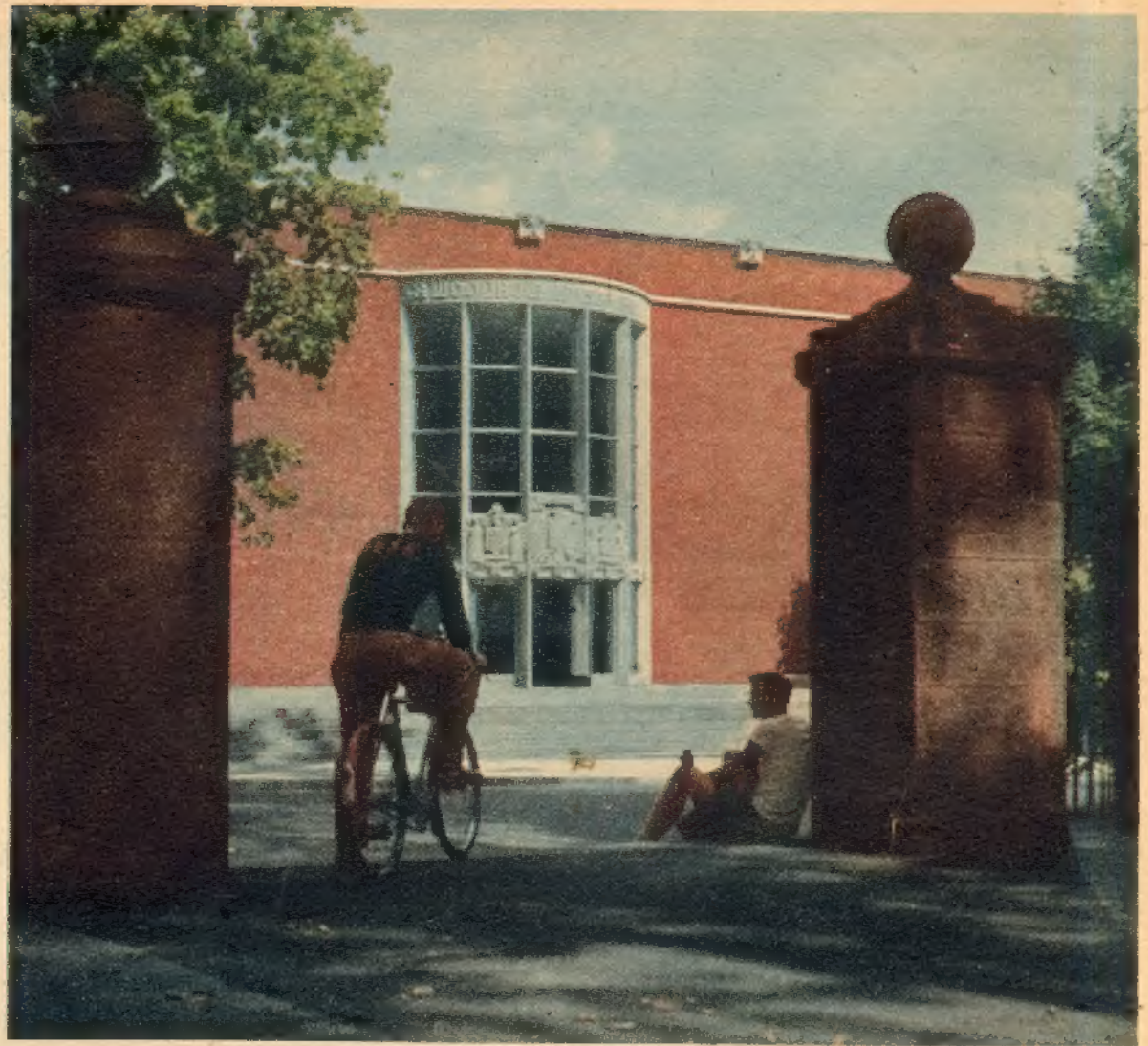
Lobby of the Harvey S. Firestone Library, "a liberal arts university in itself," which has more than 500 individual study rooms.



Chapel (left) and Mather Sun-Dial, traditional gathering place of seniors. Presented in 1907, dial is reproduction of one at Oxford.



Blair Hall, dedicated in sesqui-centennial year, was the first of Tudor Gothic buildings designed to replace earlier architecture.



Woodrow Wilson Hall, which houses the School of Public and International Affairs, memorializes one of Princeton's illustrious sons.

versity, the once-tiny college has brought the village an eminence it could not possibly have known itself. Town shaped the course of college, college shaped the course of town: today town leaders express it this way: "Education and research are our only industries."

Modern Princeton, with its magnificent campus and Oxford-like buildings, readily lends credence to a first impression that here, if anywhere, is an institution which has never known doubt or never known frustration.

How false, and in a way, how un-

fair, is that first impression. Princeton knew haunting uncertainty for most of its first century, didn't even adopt the name Princeton University until it held its 150th birthday party in 1896. The present physical appearance is something achieved within the memory of many Princeton alumni.

The Princeton story divides neatly

about that 1896 sesquicentennial celebration. That was when the little College of New Jersey relinquished an honorable name for a new and finer title. That was when young Woodrow Wilson first came forcibly to public attention. That was the central time in the year when Princeton decided to replace its hodge-podge campus architecture for the planned Tudor

Gothic now spread over the university acres south of Nassau St.

PRICETON'S 150 years before 1896 are a case study of the trials and tribulations of a college—any college—seeking to find itself. They are 150 years Princeton University wouldn't relish enduring again; yet they are 150 years in which virtually every modern Princeton tradition had its inception.

Tradition is the lifeblood of Princeton and it isn't wrong to declare

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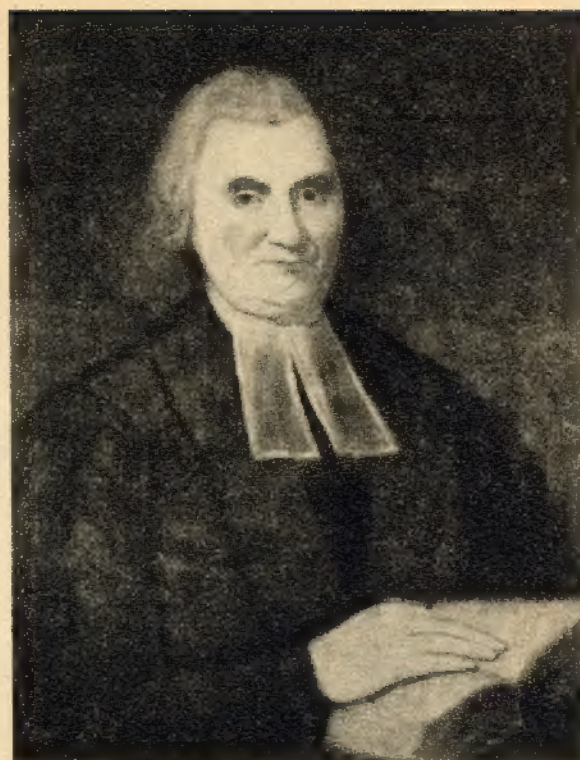
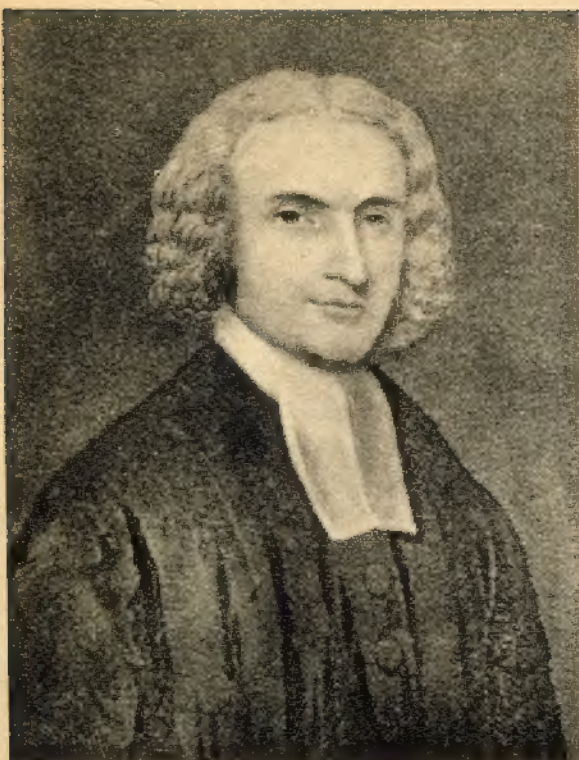
Nassau Hall, heart of Princeton, and the first real home of its predecessor, the College of New Jersey, following move from Newark in 1756.



Palmer Stadium in colorful setting for Harvard game. Princeton's orange-and-black colors were first worn by crewmen in 1874 regatta.



Remarkable loyalty of alumni at P-rade reunions and in fund drives dates to 1826 when association had James Madison as first president.



Two of early presidents: Rev. Aaron Burr (left) died on eve of the first graduation at Nassau Hall, and Rev. John Witherspoon, whose 26 years in office was rewarded by lofty attainments of graduates.

PRINCETON'S EARLY YEARS

(Continued From Preceding Page)

Nassau Hall the heart. Life at Princeton has pulsed about Old Nassau since the cornerstone laying in 1754. Turbulence and war and sentimentality have mellowed the simple old colonial stone walls and now Nassau Hall lives on in dignity, reminding a modern age of long-ago struggles.

The move of the College of New Jersey from Rev. Aaron Burr's parsonage parlors in Newark to Nassau Hall in 1756 forever set the character of the institution. It took the college from an urban atmosphere and planted it in village surroundings, a happenstance perhaps more important than anything in Princeton's long history. From that day forward town and gown traveled forward as one.

Nassau Hall was the first real home the College of New Jersey ever knew. The College's birth had been simple enough: Several critics of the way things were going in the Presbyterian Church decided to train their own ministers, and to that end secured from the New Jersey governor a college charter in 1746. Wisely, and with rare tolerance for the times, the trustees in their charter resolved to bar no student because of religious beliefs.

REV. JONATHAN DICKINSON, as first president, naturally took the infant college into his Elizabethtown home and kept it alive in the parlor. Mr. Dickinson died within four months and the orphan school moved up the pike to Newark to take up lodgings in the parlor of Rev. Aaron Burr (whose son Aaron years after was to become one of America's more controversial figures).

Mr. Burr nourished the young institution (and took care of the students as if they were his sons), but the college needed space in which to flex its academic muscles. The trustees looked around, noised about (in writing) the broad hint that a proper offer of land and cash would gain some willing town a college. New Brunswick, favored at first, dallied in

putting a solid land and cash proposition on the line—and in September 1752 Princeton villagers convinced trustees that they truly desired the college.

Two years later work began on a stone building, three stories high, 170 feet long and 54 feet wide. Trustees wanted to name this spacious structure for Governor Jonathan Belcher, Harvard alumnus but true friend of the young college. The governor insisted, however, on the name Nassau Hall, in honor of King William III, prince of Orange-Nassau. Thus fortunately the college home became "Old Nassau" rather than "Old Belcher."

Down from Newark in 1756 came President Burr, three tutors and 70 students, to occupy their new home. Sadly enough the move to Princeton brought neither peace or prosperity. Governor Belcher, true friend, died soon after the move. President Burr died four days before the first graduation at Nassau Hall in September 1757; within nine years three more presidents followed Mr. Burr to the grave.

TWO decades had passed since the first classes had met in Elizabethtown. The College of New Jersey had lost five presidents, had never known financial security, even despite occasional public lotteries for the college's benefit. So poor was the college that Mr. Burr had served three full years without salary. In 1766 the trustees looked hopefully across the ocean and asked brilliant Rev. John Witherspoon if he would leave his native Scotland to take over the helm of the drifting college.

Mrs. Witherspoon quite sensibly decided in the negative for her husband. Why should she and Mr. Witherspoon leave civilized Scotland for a Jersey Wilderness? Two years later Mr. Witherspoon (and Mrs. Witherspoon) reconsidered and came to Princeton, a most fortunate decision for college, for town and for the Colonies. At last the college began to move along the



Nassau Hall, with president's house at right, as it appeared to artist shortly after the college moved from Newark. **BELOW:** The growing campus from a lithograph of 1875 during the McCosh era.



By 1890 President-emeritus James McCosh could view with pride administration's results and here he strolled walk bearing his name.

road from provincialism to its eventual position as a national institution.

John Witherspoon charmed a wide constituency. He roamed wide through the Colonies, raising the modest funds the college needed. He improved academic standings. His college (fathers sent their sons to John Witherspoon, and only incidentally to the College of New Jersey) became a "Seminary for Statesmen." In his 26 years as president, Mr. Witherspoon gave the nation a president, a vice president, nine cabinet officers, 21 United States Senators, three Supreme Court Justices, 12 governors and 33 judges.

As President Witherspoon traveled the Colonies, he was warmed by the smoldering fires of rebellion against British authority. So, when his students turned against King George III, he didn't stop their tea burning in 1774 or their hasty organization of a 50-man company after the news of Lexington reached Princeton in April

1775. Indeed, he went all the way as a rebel, signing the Declaration of Independence and becoming a member of the Continental Congress.

THE College of New Jersey suffered cruelly during the Revolutionary War. The student body melted away almost to nothing. Worse, actual battle surged in and about Nassau Hall. Cannon shot ruptured the walls, flame ravaged the interior. Occupying forces of both sides left the Hall a shambles. Yet the violent birth of a nation brought rewards, too; in 1783 the commencement in Nassau Hall had as guests General Washington, the whole of Congress (then in session in the Hall) and other Revolutionary War heroes.

Despite the lofty attainments of its graduates and the gloriousness of its Revolutionary War heritage, the College of New Jersey withered toward seemingly imminent death. Poverty stalked the dilapidated campus, hand-



Woodrow Wilson, who was to leave his mark on Princeton, poses for official portrait as ora-



tor of the 1896 Sesqui-Centennial celebration (above) which witnessed the university's birth.

in-hand with deep despair after John Witherspoon's death in 1794.

The board of trustees seemed determined to choke the student body into either obedience or nothingness. Inevitably the rigid narrowness of the trustees and the growing American spirit of freedom of thought and action clashed violently. The campus burned with raw friction, then exploded through 10 years of intermittent rioting that set the college back at least a full generation.

President Samuel Stanhope Smith suspended five or six students after fire ruined Nassau Hall in 1802—even though no evidence could be found to link the young men with the fire. Another group of 125 students was expelled after an 1807 riot, 70 never to return. Finally, on Jan. 19, 1817, the campus rocked with what has been called "the worst student rebellion in American history."

That fateful Sunday morning students barricaded themselves inside Nassau Hall amid scenes of wild disorder. The suspension of 14 of their number merely worsened the rebellion. Students fired pistols in the air, broke windows in the Hall, pitched firewood out from the second and third floors of Nassau Hall and even

tossed ice out on the head of enraged President Ashbel Green.

EVENTUALLY an uneasy quiet returned, but the College of New Jersey tumbled to its worst days. Those students who remained on campus were often the most timid rather than the best. Plans for new buildings, a medical course, scholarships and endowments vanished. As the student body declined, the college administration narrowed its already rigid curriculum and tightened its already oppressive discipline. Inevitably student enrollment dropped still more.

Dr. James Carnahan assumed the presidency in 1823, seemingly naively unaware of the collapsing house of cards he had inherited. Downhill raced the college, until in 1827 total enrollment dipped to 71 students (from about 200 in 1800). That was the nadir; slowly the administration shored up the decaying college. When Dr. Carnahan retired in 1854 the College of New Jersey had begun to solidify the firm footing on which the university rests today.

Perhaps Dr. Carnahan's wisest course of action came when he carefully heeded the advice of young John Maclean Jr., who more than any-

one else kept the College of New Jersey alive in its worst days. Credit President Burr with giving the college a good start, credit President Witherspoon with giving it a national character—then reserve for unsung John Maclean the credit for snatching it from ruin.

IT was Maclean who talked Dr. Carnahan into staying on even as the college tottered. It was Maclean who spurred organization of the Alumni Association in 1826 and helped persuade former U.S. President James Madison to be its first president. Ever since, the remarkable loyalty of Princeton's alumni, in fund-drive time as well as at P-rade reunion time, has been the envy of college fund raisers everywhere.

Maclean pushed for expansion, even without funds in sight. He badgered prominent alumni into helping with both their dollars and with their influence among those non-alumni who had dollars. East College and West College and halls for the Clio and Whig societies arose behind Nassau Hall. Maclean's push brought a new dining hall, residences for professors, and, in 1847, a new chapel (whose cruciform shape is said to have horrified "blue Presbyterians").

Obviously, when Dr. Carnahan retired in 1854, John Maclean Jr. stepped up to the college leadership which had been his anyway in all but name. Fate haunted the new president at every turn. Nassau Hall burned again in 1855 (this time with no hint of arson). The Panic of 1857 choked off needed funds. The Civil War disrupted college prosperity in North and South.

FEW Northern colleges suffered as much as the College of New Jersey. Back in President Witherspoon's time, Southern planters began sending their sons to Princeton in such numbers that the college became known as "the northernmost of the Southern colleges." At one time nearly half the student body came from the South; in 1860 about a third of the college's 300 students were Southern sons.

War split the campus cruelly. Southerners went home to fight—

and, incidentally, many of them to achieve high rank in the Confederacy. Northerners, too, joined their army and many went equally high in Union uniforms. To underscore that Civil War division on the Princeton campus, look today at a plaque in Nassau Hall bearing the names of 70 College of New Jersey men who died in the war—35 of them in the uniform of the Blue, 35 in the uniform of the Gray.

John Maclean Jr. for a half century had his finger at his college's pulse. He found it weak when he arrived as a young tutor in 1818, left it beating strong when he retired as president in 1868. He lifted student enrollment over the 300 mark, raised total gifts of \$450,000 during his presidency—more than the total of all gifts in the 108 years prior to his presidency.

Nevertheless, if Maclean left the College of New Jersey materially strong, he also left it somewhat restricted in outlook. Critics fault him for his persistence in choosing only Presbyterians for the faculty—often in complete disregard of their abilities—and for his unwillingness to alter a sadly outmoded curriculum. In many ways, the college at Princeton had slid back toward the provincialism of 1768.

INTO the void created by Maclean's retirement blew another vivid and fresh wind from Scotland, Rev. James McCosh—strong-willed, shrewd, energetic, with "an inscrutable Scotch humor and an irresistible Scotch charm." The first of Princeton's notable Scotsmen, Rev. John Witherspoon, had arrived in Princeton in 1768; by coincidence exactly one century passed before Mr. McCosh arrived in 1868.

James McCosh shook Princeton out of her complacency and her sectionalism. His inaugural address demanded tolerance, a free access for all young men to the college's benefits and "a full-orbed system" of studies incorporating both the old classicism and a new emphasis on the "physical, mental and social sciences."

He shocked some trustees by stating on his inaugural day that the College of New Jersey must abandon its old inflexible ways, but the "grand old man's" leadership soon caught the fancy of trustees, faculty, students and alumni. Gifts streamed in—three million dollars in total—to build 14 new buildings, to found the John C. Green School of Science, to enlarge the faculty, to permit imagination and latitude in a changing curriculum featured by elective studies. He found 300 students on campus in 1868, doubled the enrollment before retiring in 1888.

The College of New Jersey changed in other ways, too, particularly in the way undergraduates spent their leisure hours. Early educational leaders frowned on athletics, even fined young men for playing catch in the academic yards. President McCosh, on the other hand, encouraged sensible participation in athletics (although at times fearing that "your strutting college heroes may consist of men

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Typical room of an undergraduate of 1886 in Witherspoon Hall.



Triangle Club after presenting first show, "Julius Caesar," in 1891. Author Booth Tarkington, '93, is third from right, second row.

PRINCETON'S EARLY YEARS

(Continued From Preceding Page)

who have merely powerful arms and legs").

NOT all Princeton athletics started in the McCosh era, of course. Officially-approved athletics date to 1859, when a barny wooden gymnasium was built in the corner of the cricket field, at a cost of \$984. Gymnastic enthusiasts spun on the parallel bars and trapeze rings until 1865, when a report spread that a tramp diseased with yellow fever had slept in the gym. The college applied the torch to the building, and in 1869 it was replaced by a \$20,000 stone structure—crude by modern standards but exceptionally handsome by an 1869 yardstick.

Baseball really launched Princeton in organized athletics in 1860, two years after campus teams started playing informally. In 1860 the "Nassaus" traveled to Orange and escaped as darkness fell with a 42-42 tie (the hitters being somewhat ahead of the pitchers). They defeated the Philadelphia Athletics in 1863 as the apex of a highly successful season. The Nassaus also squared off against Rutgers in the nation's first intercollegiate football game in 1869, but that's an episode better saved for the Rutgers story. These athletic enterprises popularized the House of Nassau colors of Orange and Black (first worn by a crew at a Saratoga regatta in 1874).

Those with non-athletic turns of mind also found increased opportunity for expression. Earlier Princeton generations had expressed themselves most vehemently in the Clio-sophic and Whig societies (founded in about 1765) or in the Nassau Literary Magazine, started in 1842 as the first college literary publication in America.

NOW, with wider freedom, students organized the Princetonian in 1876 and so successful was the undergrad-

uate newspaper that the "Prince" became a daily in 1892. The Princeton Tiger, humor magazine, first appeared in 1882. The college orchestra and glee club flourished after 1870. Another Princeton tradition, the Triangle Club, won its first fame in 1891 by presenting "Julius Caesar," as rewritten by Post Wheeler, '91, and a young sophomore named Booth Tarkington, '93. Eating clubs sprang up and died down before becoming firmly established in the 1890s, but one, the Ivy Club, has lived since 1879.

True, there was a new freedom and a new age of expression in both words and muscles, but fittingly enough, at the same time a new high code of student honor also touched the campus. Students at a mass meeting in 1872 passed resolutions condemning cheating at examinations, but not until 1893 (after urging by the Princetonian) did the administration take the heavy hint and abolish forever faculty supervision of examinations. No Princeton tradition is finer than the honor system. Today's student is as justly proud as his 1893 fellows of this simple statement he affixes to every examination:

"I pledge my honor as a gentleman that, during this examination, I have neither given nor received assistance."

So the College of New Jersey grew after James McCosh arrived, grew in size of physical plant and in character and diversity of its students. On the day of his retirement in 1888 virtually everyone recognized that university status was inevitable for the once-tiny college in the village on the high road between Philadelphia and New York.

NOT everyone felt pleased with the growth. The New York Tribune, taking full advantage of its editorial license, asked bluntly why so much money was being poured into buildings rather than into faculty? There were those of the trustees, faculty and alumni who debated whether the Princeton institution might not better stay "the best college" rather than



Members of the Ivy Club, one of Princeton's earliest eating clubs, as an 1888 photographer grouped them in pose typical of period.

become "the worst university" in the land.

The time for being disturbed had passed. McCosh's successor, gentle, scholarly Rev. Francis L. Patton, fell heir to the rolling stream of money and the swiftly-rising enrollment. President Patton knew how to build. Seventeen new buildings arose on campus before he retired in 1902, crowding in so much that East College had to be torn down to build Pyne Library (as sentimental Old Grads decried the loss of East College as "The Crime of '97"). Student enrollment doubled to 1,200 by 1902.

University in all except name; that was the College of New Jersey. It had a full four-year School of Engineering, opened in 1875; its course of grad-

uate studies had started in 1869 and had grown rapidly. Its educational philosophies were liberal and widespread. President McCosh in 1887 could say: "... we have a studium generale which is the essence of a university."

THE College of New Jersey celebrated its 150th birthday handsomely, with a three-day sesqui-centennial starting on October 20, 1896. Crowded Princeton town played host to scores of visiting dignitaries. Three days of celebration followed, filled with a brilliant academic procession, exceptionally memorable speeches, a gay torchlight procession, fireworks and a song-fest heard by President and Mrs. Grover Cleveland standing on the steps of Nassau Hall.

Then, on the third day of the sesqui-centennial, President Patton rose to speak, and a "common tide of emotion swelled and rose in the hearts of the alumni" as they waited for the announcement all knew would be forthcoming. He spoke of the successful efforts to boost the endowment fund, told of the college's progress. Finally he turned forever a page on 150 years when he said:

"... It is my great pleasure to say that from this moment what for 150 years has been known as the College of New Jersey shall in all future time be known as Princeton University."

Applause rolled in volume through Alexander Hall, colored enthusiastically with cheers for "Princeton University." A college died and a university lived—and forever held sacred the memory of those who had conceived an infant college in Elizabethtown, those who had moved it to Princeton village, those who had kept it from dying in the depressing 1820s and those who after 1868 broke entirely free from the shackles which held the tiny college down.

Ahead lay some difficult days, many far more glorious (if not so spectacular) days. But, for the moment, it was enough to be at last Princeton University in Princeton town.

Next Sunday: Conclusion of "The Princeton Story"



Examination time at Princeton under the honor system